SUCCESS STORY

SEWING TECHNOLOGY, INC.

New York Manufacturing Extension Partnership

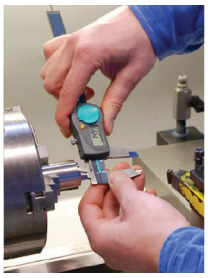
"The required changes were implements much more quickly due to the synergy between Insyte Consulting and our internal team." Will Bargar, CEO

ENABLING SEWING TECHNOLOGY TO MET U.S. NAVY REQUIREMENTS

ABOUT. Sewing Technology is a Buffalo, New York contract manufacturer of cut & sew products, primarily for the aerospace and defense markets. The company was founded in 1993 and was a woman-owned enterprise until 2015 when it was acquired by the current ownership. At that time Sewing Technology had sales of about $1.5 million and employed 14 people, including both shop floor and office personnel. Manufacturing operations have been conducted within 5,000 square feet of a multi-story light industrial building on a single shift.

THE CHALLENGE. Shortly after the ownership change, the company needed to execute on a contract from the U.S. Navy to supply 5,000 helmet covers per month over the next several years. These are worn on the flight decks of aircraft carriers and to a large extent are considered to be a consumable commodity. Although this represented a huge sales opportunity, there was an issue in meeting the monthly demand, as seen in an immediate production backlog. This situation was exacerbated by the limited availability of trained sewers in the area. It was also difficult to realize acceptable profitability on a low margin product.

MEP'S ROLE. Insyte Consulting (part of NY MEP and a NIST MEP affiliate) was engaged to help Sewing Technology address these issues. It was determined that the effective application of Lean Manufacturing concepts would enable the company to significantly increase throughput, meet on-time delivery requirements and improve overall profitability. The key staff members were given a Lean Manufacturing overview that provided a foundation for the planned changes. The next step was to determine the required TAKT time which led to a review of work sequence, task times and balanced workflow. Based on these analyses, Standardized Work was introduced into the work area and Cellular Layout was designed to facilitate production flow. Visual Controls and guidelines were also introduced once the changes were made for effective cell operation. Cell supplies purchasing and finished goods stocking methodologies were coordinated with cell operations. Metrics were also established so that the company could monitor on-going cell performance.



RESULTS

- Increased net margin on helmet covers by **45%**
- Realized a **60%** increase in overall company sales
- Expanded employment to **30** people within 6 months
- Consistently meets U.S. Navy delivery requirements

NEXT STEPS

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